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Selected Tale.

The Blossom in the Wilderness.

BY VIRGINIA P. TOWNSEND.

Do you ever judge, readers, of the character of the inmates of the physiognomy of their houses? I do. And so when the stage swept round the corner, I looked out eagerly for, as the driver had told me, about "ten rods up the road," stood the house of Philander White. His wife was my mother's own cousin, and I was just thirteen years old when I went there to make my first visit. There had been some quarrel between the two families, two or three score of years anterior to my visit; and though my mother and Mrs. White never participated in this, the feud of some coldness between them.

But to "cut a long story short," for the pen and paper gossip may be more dignified, but a whit better than tea-party scandal, I had been an invalid all the previous winter.

When soft April days, to which my mother looked forward so eagerly, came, they brought no bloom to my cheek, no vigor to my step. My constitution seemed to have lost all its recuperative power, and the doctor said, "Send her into the country, Mrs. May. If that doesn't help her she is lost to you!"

Just before this Mrs. White had heard that a mutual friend, of my illness, and the very day of the blunt physician's ultimatum, brought a letter to my mother—"For the sake of my old love, Janet," it read, "let all that may have come between you and me at an earlier time be forgotten. The grass is springing green on the hills of Meadow Brook, and now, in this late May—is the time for Jennie to come to us. There is a prophecy of health for her in the soft wind that is lifting the edges of my paper as I write. We know she is your all, and we will be very tender of your darling. Will you not trust her with us for a single summer?"

And before another week had passed my trunk was packed for "Philander White, Esq., Meadow Brook."

I looked out, as I said, and there sat the pleasant white house, with its green window blinds, the shubbery in front and the cherry trees behind. My heart went out to it at once, and it did a moment later to the gentle-faced woman and the fair, dark haired girl, who rushed out on the broad front steps, and, kissing my cheeks, said, "Cousin Jennie, you are very fast welcome."

But it is not to tell you of that summer, though I look across the grey years to its green picture in the May-land of my memory, that I have taken up my pen this morning.

Suffice it, the mountain breezes of Meadow Brook did their work well; and when in the early autumn, my mother came for her child, she could hardly identify the rosy checked girl that rushed in with her curls dangling about her face and held her rosy lips for a kiss.

I think it must have been nearly two months after my domestication at aunt Mary's—for so I called my mother's cousin—before uncle Charles Brace, her husband's brother, visited us. He was a minister, and Cora and I anticipated the gentleman's advent with anything but pleasurable emotions.

Our conceived notions of the gentleman's elongated visage and solemn, Puritanical manner, which we regarded necessary concomitants of the profession, soon vanished before the beautiful kindness of his smile and the winning gentleness of his manner. He was uncle Phil's youngest brother, not more than twenty-eight at that time; and his religion had deepened and harmonized his fine poetic temperament without checking the outflow of that under current of humor which sparkled through his character. "Uncle Charlie" was soon our companion in our rides and rambles, and our confidant in all our girlish plans.

"You don't really mean so, uncle Charlie?" and Cora's bright face was lifted from the roses and geraniums we were wearing into a bouquet for the parlor mantle. "You don't really think what you just said, that in every heart there is some fountain, some blossom in the human wilderness of every soul?"

He put down his paper, and came toward us. "I haven't a doubt of it, my little girl. The story I was just reading of the hardened old man who cried because the child gave him a bunch of marigolds, corroborates my remark. The light that is in us cannot quite become darkness; the heart that might bring forth 'a hundred fold' for the harvest of heaven, will never become such a desert but some good seed might take root therein."

"I don't believe it would, though, in Farmer Keep. You don't know him as well as I do, uncle Charlie. He's one of

the richest men in all Meadow Brook, worth thousands, and thousands. He's a bachelor, you know, and lives in the great red house on the road to Woodbury; you remember? Well he never goes to church; he never loved a human being or did a kind thing in all his life. Now, don't you think Farmer Keep—Why grandma Deane, how do you do?"

"The old lady whose entrance put this sudden period to my cousin's earnest persuasion, came slowly toward the rocking-chair. Cora drew out for her. She was the oldest person in the village. The hair under her cap, white as hill-side snow, had imprisoned the sunshine of four-score and ten summers. But she still retained much of the physical and mental stamina which, with her active temperament, had made her so vigorous a woman for many years."

"What's that you're saying, child, about Farmer Keep?" said the old lady, with a pleasant smile, as she pined her knitting-needle to her waist.

"Why I was telling uncle Charlie what a cold, hard kind of a man he is. You've always known him, grandma Deane. Now did he ever do a good thing or ever love anybody in his life?"

"Yes he loved a girl once, I remember."

"Farmer Keep loved a girl once?" repeated Cora with a half contemptuous and wholly skeptical curl of her berry-red lip.

"She's forgotten," she added in an undertone to her uncle and me, for grandma Deane was slightly deaf.

"No I haven't forgotten neither," placing her hand on Cora's hair. "I have held Lucy Reid on my lap too often, and rocked her cradle—poor little motherless thing—too many times to have forgotten."

"Cora's look of credulity was giving way to one of curiosity. "Grandma Deane, you tell us all about it? Jennie and I will sit down on the big stool, and I know by that look in uncle Charlie's eyes he wants to hear too. Come, Jennie, let the flowers go," and my vivacious cousin established herself on the stool at the old lady's feet.

Grandma Deane slipped the yarn round her little finger and commenced:

"Let me see—it can't be more than forty-two or three years this summer since Justin Keep came up to Farmer Reid's to let himself out for the harvest boy through harvesting."

The Reid's house stood a little this side of Stony creek. There's nothing left of it now except the chimney, and it looks old, grey and bold, from the grass all about it; but fifty years ago it was a fine old place, with the lilacs in front, and the hop vines running all round the back. Lucy was hardly three weeks old when she lost her mother. Her father never married again, and the child grew up there in the old home as fair and sweet as the flowers about it.

She was turning into fifteen when Justin came there that summer. He was a shy, strange, awkward sort of lad, and the neighbors all said Farmer Reid never'd get his salt for his porridge out of him.

He'd been bound out till he was eighteen to some man down in Maine, and he hadn't a relation in the world that he knew of, nor a suit of decent clothes, when he came to Farmer Reid's.

But for all this, Justin proved a smart, likely boy, and the farmer, who somehow never was very before-hand—I always thought his wife's sudden death hurt him—found that Justin was a real prize.

At first he was gloomy and silent, doing his work, and taking little notice of any body; but he couldn't stand it long before Lucy. I'd like to have seen the heart that girl's smile wouldn't have thawed out.

She was just like a bird round the old place, singing from morn till night; and her blue eyes, that were like her mother's, seemed always letting out one laugh as her red lips did another. I never wondered her father doubted on her as he did; and, of course, Justin wasn't long in the house before she tried to make friends with him.

Poor fellow! it must have seemed very strange at first; for I don't think any body had ever given him a kind word until he came to Meadow Brook.

But he made ladders for her flower vines to run on, and got shells for the borders, and propped up the dahlias, and did a thousand other things which took them out into the garden after supper, and made them the best of friends.

Lucy had a playful, childish way about her, that made her seem much younger than she was; then she was small of her age; so at fifteen she didn't seem a day older than you are Cora.

Well, she rode on top of Justin's hay cart, and helped him husk the corn in the barn, and pretty soon the farmers noticed a great change in Justin.

He got him a new suit of clothes, and his face lost its downy look; and, after harvesting, Farmer Reid made him an offer to stay all winter.

So Justin staid, and, taking Lucy's advice, went to the district school; and he hadn't any education before, he went ahead of many an old scholar that winter.

Well, Justin stayed with the farmer four years. Then he had a good offer somewhere in York State, and concluded to stop for the winter only.

Lucy Reid was grown into a young woman by this time, and a handsomer one, children, these dim eyes never looked on.

I don't know how it happened, for Lucy might have had her pick of the boys for miles around, but somehow she took to Justin, and, when he left, they were engaged to be married one year from that time."

"Why, grandma Deane, you aren't going to stop now?" cried Cora, in alarm, for the old lady had laid down her knitting.

"No, my child," and she removed her spectacles and wiped her eyes. "But the rest is a sad story, and I must hurry over it."

I don't know exactly how it happened, but that winter Lucy's father got into a terrible lawsuit with Squire Wheeler. There was some flaw in the title, and people said it was plain the old man must let the homestead go.

They said, too, he'd never survive it; and better, perhaps, he never had, than have kept it as he did. But one day Squire Wheeler, to all the neighborhood's astonishment, rode over to the farm.

What he did there was never exactly known; but in a little while it was rumored that the suit was withdrawn, and next spring, Lucy Reid was to be married to Squire Wheeler. And so it was. One bright March day she went to the old church yonder and gave herself to him.

He was a good looking man, but not over smart, the neighbors whispered; and I always thought it was his money more than anything else that kept him up."

"But Justin, grandma Deane—what became of him?"

"There is a dark look about the whole matter. Lucy was made the victim of some terrible falsehood, I never blamed her father, for the idea of losing the old homestead seemed completely to shatter him."

I only know that Squire Wheeler and his son were at the bottom of it; and that Lucy Reid went to the altar believing that Justin Keep had been false to her."

"Dear me, how dreadful! Did he ever come back?"

"Yes, the next May. Lucy had been a wife two months. Justin had not heard of her marriage. She was at home visiting her father. When she met him at the door she fell down like one suddenly stricken with a fit."

But he carried her into the house, and there they learned all. Both had been deceived.

It was a terrible scene that old front room witnessed. Justin swore a terrible oath of vengeance; and it was not till, with clasped hands and streaming eyes, the young wife knelt to the only man she ever loved, and pleaded for the life of her husband, that he promised for her sake to spare him.

But, from the day of Justin's visit, Lucy was a changed woman. All the light and gladness of her being seemed dead in her, and she moved about her house, pale and quiet, with a look of patient suffering in her once sunny eyes that made my heart ache to behold."

"And her husband—did she ever tell him what she had learned?"

"I think not. His father and Lucy's died in less than two years after the marriage. The Squire was much less wealthy than people supposed. The next spring, Lucy and her husband removed West, and somehow people lost sight of them."

"And Justin?"

"You know the rest, my child. He became a moody, unhappy man, asking no sympathy and giving none. But he was always smart at a bargain, and in a few years he laid up enough to buy out Deacon Platt's farm, when his son moved to the South."

Ever since he has added acres to his lands, and hundreds to the banks; but for all that, he is a man soured toward all his race—a man who was never known to give a little child a smile, or a beggar a crust of bread. I have sometimes thought his heart was like a great desert, without a tree to shade or a stream to gladden it. And yet it bore a bright blossom once; and believe me, children, for it is the word of an old woman who has seen and known much of the ways of man, it is so always. The heart may be a great wilderness, but in none of its by-ways there has grown a flower."

Cora and I looked at each other and at uncle Charlie. Just then aunt Mary came in. She had been out, and had not heard of grandma Deane's visit.

But Cora stole up to her uncle, and winding her arms about his neck, whispered, "I shall believe it always, uncle Charlie, now I have heard the story about Farmer Keep, that there is a blossom in the wilderness of every heart."

It was a sultry August day, in the summer I passed at Meadow Brook. The wind, low and slumberous as the hush of a

mother's voice at nightfall, crept up through the corn, and down among the rye and wheat fields, that lay like broad green folds about the dwelling of farmer Keep. There was no poem of flowers written about the front yard; no graceful harmonizing touches of creeping vine or waving curtains about the old red homestead; and yet it had a quiet, substantial, matter-of-fact physiognomy, that somehow made a home feeling about your heart.

I think it must have been this unconscious feeling which decided the course of the girl, who stood at the point where the two roads diverged, and gazed wistfully about her that afternoon.

She seemed very tired, and her coarse straw bonnet and calico dress were covered with dust. If you had looked in her face you would not have forgotten it. It could not have been more than fifteen summers. It was very pale, and its sweet, sad beauty, made you think of nothing but forest flowers drenched with summer rains.

Her eyes were of that deep moist blue that rolls out from under the edge of April clouds, and her lips ripe and full as mellow strawberries, had that touching sorrowfulness about them which tells you always the heart beneath is full of tears.

"The girl's hand clasped tightly the little boy's by her side. The resemblance between them would have told you at once they were brother and sister, but his little face could not have covered more than a third of hers."

The little fellow's eyes were full of tears, and the bright curls that crept out from his hat were damp with moisture. He was hungry and tired and motherless! What sadder history can one tell of a little child?

"There, Benny, cheer up. We'll go to that old red house, and see what we can do. Don't it look nice, with the great trees in front? And the girl in a tone of assumed cheerfulness, as she quickened her steps."

"Yes, but I'm so tired, Lucy. If I only had a big piece of bread and butter!"

"Well, dear, I'll try to get you some there. It don't seem like begging to ask for it in the country."

A few minutes later she opened the broad back gate, and went to the kitchen door. Farmer Keep's housekeeper—an old woman with yellow white cap, and check apron tied over her luscious woadsey skirt—answered her knock.

"Do you want any help, or do you know of any one round here that does?" timidly asked the girl.

The old lady peered at her with dim eyes. "No," said she. "There ain't but four on us—Farmer Keep and the two hired men and me. It's harvest time just now, though, and I reckon you'll find a place up in the village."

"Thank you, Benny here, my little brother, is tired for we have walked from the depot. Can you let us come in and rest awhile?"

"Sartin you can."

The sight of the child touched the heart of the woman, and they went into the large kitchen, and sat down in the flag-bottomed chairs, while with a glowing check the girl cast about in her mind for the best manner in which to present her petition for food.

Before she had decided, the master of the house suddenly entered the kitchen, for it was nearly dinner time. He was a large, muscular, broad-chested, sun-burnt man, with a hard, gloomy expression on his face, where many years were now beginning to write their history.

He stood still with surprise, gazing on the new occupants of the kitchen; and the boy drew close to his sister, and the girl threw up a timid, frightened glance into the gloomy face.

"You don't know of any body round here that wants a little help, do ye, farmer?" asked the old woman. "Here's a girl wants a place, and as she's walked from the depot, I told her she might come in and rest a bit before she went up into the village to try her luck."

"No," shortly answered the farmer. "Dinner ready!" and the rich man turned away, without one gentle word or kind look for the homeless children whom God had brought to his door.

"Lucy, Lucy!" How those little trembling tones went down, down, down into the man's hard heart! How the dead days of his youth burst out from their graves, and rushed through his memory at that low broken Lucy, Lucy! He turned and looked at the girl, not so shy as before, but with a kind of eager questioning interest.

"What is your name?"

"Lucy Wheeler, sir."

He staggered back and caught hold of the nearest chair. "And what was your mother's?"

"Lucy Reid. She used to live in Meadow Brook, and so I come here to get work, for she told me to before she died."

At that moment the angels looked down and saw the seed that had lain for two score years in the heart of Justin Keep spring up and the flower blossom in the wilderness.

He strode across the kitchen to the bewildered girl. He brushed back her bonnet, and turned her face to the light. He could not be mistaken. It was the one framed and hung in the darkened room of his soul. The blue eye of his Lucy looked once more in his own. At that moment the little boy pushed up between them, and gazed wistfully into the man's face.

Farmer Keep sat down and took the child on his knee. He tried to speak, but instead, great sobs came, and heaved his strong chest. The trio in the kitchen gazed on him in mute astonishment.

"Lucy's children! Lucy's children!" he murmured at last, in a voice whose tenderness was like that of a mother. "God has sent you to me. For her sake this shall be your home; for her sake I will be a father to you."

Five years afterward Cora wrote to me: "We are having fine times now, dear cousin Jennie, and Mama wants to know if you do not need to renew your rosy cheeks among the dews of Meadow Brook. Uncle Charlie is with us this summer, and if you were here also my happiness would be complete."

Lucy Wheeler—you remember her—was the place in my heart next to yours. Her disposition is as lovely as her face, and that is saying a great deal, for its rare, sweet beauty does one good to behold it. Farmer Keep seems to worship her and Benny. He is a changed man now, and he goes to church regular as the Sabbath. He has spared no pains or expense in Lucy's education, and she will be a most accomplished woman. She is here very often, and if you were here also my happiness would be complete."

But O, Jennie, what a lesson has all this taught me! How it has deepened my faith in God and in humanity!

Now when my heart yearns over the wretched spinning contest, I remember always that there is a flower in the wilderness."

Bees and Honey.

Every farmer on our Island, may, with very little expense, and almost no labor, add a considerable item to his yearly income, by introducing a few hives of bees.

The raising of these industrious little laborers, is carried on very extensively in Russia, not only in the more southern parts but even in Siberia. The Government gives encouragement to the raising of them and "the total production in the whole country, of Honey, is 16,236,000 lbs., and of Wax, 5,412,000 lbs., the value of which is \$2,500,000. Mr. Henry Eddy, of North Bridgewater, in his letter to the Patent Office Department, says, "that I have had much experience in the production of artificial colonies," and also what is termed the "non-swarming" system of bees, but have abandoned both, and am satisfied that the bees know the best time and mode of conducting their colonization. I adopt the natural system of swarming, destroy no bees, but keep them alive and at work, and if I have any advantage over others, it consists in placing them in circumstances under which full scope is given to their instincts. My profits from bee culture seldom fail from the loss of colonies in winter, or from depredations from the moth, at other seasons. By the mode I pursue, certain swarms are made to pay, in the increase of stock and honey, a profit of 100 per cent, while others give 500 to 600 per cent. The average profit of my entire stock, for several years, has been 237 per cent, per annum. My surplus honey sells readily in market, for 25 cents per lb."

The great abundance of flowers which our fields and swamps produce, are sufficient to supply thousands of hives of bees with honey.

Babies in Church.

Babies are fine things in their places. We like them at home in the nursery, the only proper place for that class of juveniles coming under the denomination of babies. But in church, babies are nuisances. Now growing, now crying, constantly kicking up some noise or other, they distract the attention of the audience, and disturb the nerves of the speaker. Candies will sometimes keep them quiet, but not often. Babies never sleep in churches—not they. They are as wide awake as we are, but by no means as still. Some fond mothers take their babies to church for the purpose of showing them. This is a bad policy. Nobody except the doting parent ever sees any beauty in babies at church. We never saw a baby yet, however smart at home, that did credit to itself in a public assembly. It would be sure to do something to make everybody hate it before the meeting was half over. Mothers, therefore who wish to preserve the characters of their babies, for being well behaved and quiet babies, should never take them to church or in a stage coach.

Historical.

MEMOIR OF RHODE ISLAND.

1678.

Deputies for the several Towns.

Newport, Jno. Coggeshall, Caleb Carr, Thomas Ward, Edward Richmond, John Greene, John Rogers.

Providence, Arthur Fenner, John Sayles, Nathaniel Waterman, William Hopkins.

Portsmouth, Wm. Woodall, Robert Hodgson, Francis Brayton, Latham Clarke, Warwick, James Greene, Edmund Calverly, Benjamin Burton, Benj. Gorton, East Greenwich, John Spencer, Samuel Bennett.

The Island of Canonicut was incorporated a township by the name of Jamestown. A tax of £300 was assessed on all the towns in the colony which was apportioned as follows:

Newport, £136; Providence, £10; Portsmouth, £68; Warwick, £8; New Shoreham, £29; Kingston, £19; East Greenwich, £2; Jamestown, £29; after which Kingston was excused for one half of their tax.

By the above apportionment, we are enabled in some degree to judge of the effect of the Indian war upon the respective towns, and we are not a little surprised to find the town of Westerly taxed at only £2. This circumstance induces us to believe that the damage done to Westerly by the Indian war was much more considerable than we before apprehended.

Voted that whereas our late honored Governor, William Coddington Esq. is deceased. This assembly do forthwith proceed to the election of another, in his room or stead."

Major John Cranston is chosen Governor, and engaged in open court."

The first assistant, Mr. James Barker was appointed Deputy Governor in the room of John Cranston who had been raised from Deputy Governor to Governor, and the vacancy in the House filled.

Biography of Gov. Wm. Coddington. He came from Lincolnshire, in England, and embarked for America with Governor Hutchinson in 1639, having been appointed in England the year before, as one of the assistants of the Massachusetts colony. In 1631 he returned to England in the ship Lyon, and brought out his family to Boston. During his residence in Boston he was one of the first merchants there, and built the first brick house in that town. He became dissatisfied with the ecclesiastical government in Massachusetts, and in 1635 associated himself with 17 others who purchased Rhode Island from the natives—Mr. Coddington came to Aquidneck (now Rhode Island) to look for a place of settlement about the time of the Pequot war, which shows an intention of planting a new colony, some time before the plan was seriously undertaken. He with 17 others, his associates, incorporated themselves on 7th day of March 1637-8, and elected him their chief magistrate or judge. He purchased the island in his own name, as agent for the company, the deed of which is dated 24th of March, 1637-8. The actual settlement took place early in May, and the first public meeting was held May 13, 1638, at Portsmouth. He held the chief magistracy of the Island, until it was incorporated with Providence and Warwick in 1647. He removed from Portsmouth with eight others of the proprietors in 1639 and settled the town of Newport, and was the first man engaged in commerce in that town. In 1651 he was appointed by the supreme authority in England as Governor of the islands in the Narragansett Bay, which again separated the island from the towns on the main for about three years. After which he lived retired from public life for some time, but in the years 1674, 1675 and 1678 he was Governor of the colony, and was in that place at the time of his death, which took place Nov. 1st 1678. His estate must have been considerable, for in addition to his large landed property in this country he had also a plantation in Barbadoes. He was a man of learning and contributed more than perhaps any other to establishing the colony of Rhode Island, and laying the foundation of civil and religious liberty in America. His age was 78 years.

1679.

At the General Assembly held for the colony at Newport the 6th of May 1679. A number of gentlemen were admitted and the assembly adjourned to the next day, May 7.

BY ELECTION.

John Cranston, Governor.

Walter Clarke, Deputy Governor.

And tests.

Caleb Carr, Joseph Clarke, Arthur Fenner, John Abbot, Thomas Ward, Stephen Arnold, John Whipple Jr, John Sanford, Samuel Gorton, Thomas Greene.

John Sanford, Recorder. Edmund Calverly, Gen. Sergeant. Peleg Sanford, Treasurer. Edward Richmond, Gen. Attorney. Edward Calverly, Gen. Solicitor.

Poetry.

Translated from the German. THE BROTHERS.

Brothers met in bloody strife,
With sword, and shield, and spear;
In Liebenstein the elder comes
From yonder castle door.

Younger is from Sternberg;
Bark you their quickened breath
By bath for a blooming bride,
They battle to the death!

It were they one; each wicked deed
United found them aye;
In vain a weary wanderer
They smote by night and day.

And once a palmer sad and hoar,
Upon his pious way,
Joy set upon, and stole his store,
To death as low he lay.

A grey hairs touched their hard hearts not,
His prayers but made them worse;
A dying, on his cruel twin
He cast a fearful curse.

He cursed them with his latest breath;
He cursed them through their life;
He foretold their woful end,
In most unnatural strife.

At last this curse has come to pass;
By their own hands they die!
His gazing would give out the life,
As how of earth they lie.

He see! a lovely maiden comes!
She stands the twin before;
That too late she comes to save;
That awful battle's o'er.

Oh say! thus gaped the eld' forth,
He withered and scarce could see,
That not for'd me alone? Oh, heav'n!
Would thou'dst been able to me!

Peace, foul the ravager sternly, thus:
A foul as his old, departed
As hence, wretch of lie, for mine
Alone has been my heart.

A fierce fell glower the elder gave,
And gasped his blood-stained sword;
Then backward fell, and yielded life,
And died without a word.

The younger grimly gazed on him;
That gaze—it was his last!
For death his dim eye shrouded soon,
And life's light from it passed.

And that sweet maid, as mild of mood;
For neither knew she love;
So fierce wild passion of that pair
Her heart did never move.

But to appease offended Heaven,
To win those sinners grace,
He made a vow from this fair world
To hide for aye her face.

One deep, deep grave he dug for both;
They're buried where they fell;
But their bad lives and wretched death
Are still remembered well.

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smooth and soft. Prepared and sold by
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